Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) signed an Exploration Service Contract with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) on 25.12.2002 for the Farsi offshore Block in Iran. The participating interest of three consortium members OVL, IOC and OIL is 40%, 40% and 20% respectively. The projected investment by the consortium in the Block is of the order of US $ 38 million (Rs. 186 crore approximately) and the initial works for exploration of the block have already started.

Oil reserves in east coast

720. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Director-General of Hydrocarbons has recently revealed that the east coast will be the country's future Oil and Gas bowl with a potential of supplying upto 7 billion tonnes of Oil and Oil equivalents as reported in The Times of India of 7th January, 2003; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and the steps taken to tap the oil reserves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) As per the recent studies carried out by Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH), resources for the East Coast have been estimated at about 7 billion tonnes of oil and oil equivalent of gas. However, only a part of these resources would get converted into inplace reserves through systematic exploration. Government has taken several steps to accelerate exploration of oil and gas in the country including in East coast offshore. Government have signed contracts for 70 blocks including 30 blocks in the East coast offshore for exploration of oil and gas under the first three rounds of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). In addition, exploration works are also being carried out by ONGC in Petroleum Exploration Licenses (PELs) granted to them on nomination basis as well contracts signed prior to NELP in East coast to assess hydrocarbon potential. Oil and gas are already being produced from East coast offshore areas.

LPG bottling plant at Rajahmundry in A.P.

721. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state: